

**Testimony before the joint public hearing of the
Appropriations Committee and Human Services Committee
May 21, 2013**

**Support of
Home and Community Based Services Waiver for Elders Amendment**

Good morning, Senator Harp, Representative Walker, Senator Slossberg and Representative Abercrombie and distinguished members of the Appropriations and the Human Services Committee. My name is Daniela Giordano, and I am the Public Policy Director for Adult, State, and National matters for the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Connecticut. I am writing to you on behalf of NAMI Connecticut to support the Home and Community Based Services Waiver for Elders Amendment (waiver number CT.0104), a 1915(c) Home and Community-Based Services Waiver.

This waiver currently serves individuals age 65 and older and supports them in leaving and/or avoiding institutionalized care. Elders who are eligible for this waiver's services are able to live in less restrictive and less costly community based settings with appropriate supports and services in place.

Based on research recently completed by the Department of Social Services (DSS) and the University of Connecticut to identify system gaps and resources, several factors were identified that led to some program participants' ultimate nursing home placement. These factors included a lack of home care services on nights and weekends. Another significant challenge was the number of clients with mental health and/or substance abuse issues and the lack of available services to meet those needs.

DSS is requesting to amend the current waiver to include extended personal care assistance (PCA) services to fill the identified gap, assistive technology and expand eligibility to working disabled eligibility coverage groups.

This amendment would allow more Connecticut residents to have greater control over their lives and achieve greater independence in the community while providing the state a more cost-effective, flexible solution to long-term care. Allowing this amendment to be submitted will move us one step closer to providing comprehensive, cost-conscious care to people in the state. Health and health needs are comprehensive and are not naturally separated between 'physical' and 'mental' health but include all of it, mind/brain and body. Adding the practical supports of enhanced PCA services will benefit the entire person.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully yours, Daniela Giordano

241 Main Street, 5th Floor, Hartford, CT 06106 • (860) 882-0236 • (800) 215-3021

Fax: (860) 882-0240 • Website: www.namict.org